

Rural Reflections

2012



A Year-In-Review from
YOUR South Dakota
Department of
Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Ag Policy
Ag Development
Ag Services
Resource Conservation & Forestry
South Dakota State Fair
Wildland Fire

sdda.sd.gov



Office of the Secretary

The Secretary of Agriculture is appointed by the Governor and is responsible for the development, implementation and oversight of agricultural policy within state government.

The Office of the Secretary facilitates:

- Department Administration, Budget and Policy
- Information Dissemination
- Legislative Support



Walt Bones
Secretary of Agriculture
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Jon Farris
Deputy Secretary
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Spotlight on YOUR Secretary of Ag

- 1. Where are you originally from?** I was born and raised on the farm northeast of Parker, SD.
- 2. What are some of your hobbies?** Reading (mostly fiction – Dan Brown, John Grisham, Alistair MacLean), water skiing and fixing things that “can’t be” fixed.
- 3. Why did you decide to work for SDDA?** This opportunity was a great way to give back to a state and an industry that has blessed not only myself, but my family as well.
- 4. What about your job do you love most?** The people . . . both here in the Department of Ag, Legislators, fellow Cabinet members and last but not least, all the wonderful people involved in producing for and supporting our state’s #1 industry.
- 5. What has been the highlight of your career so far?** Flying with the Governor and his team when we went to Chicago to promote SD and SD Agriculture to the Bel Brands site selection committee.



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A Letter From Walt

Livestock Development in South Dakota

My Fellow Ag Enthusiasts,

In the last six months, the South Dakota Department of Agriculture has developed and implemented a coordinated and comprehensive effort to help our livestock industry grow. Since this effort was started, the landscape has changed and with these challenges, livestock producers have shown a remarkable resilience and desire to expand their business or relocate to South Dakota.

We share the long term optimism with our “next generation of livestock producers”, yet we also recognize the challenges they face in their desire to retain and/or build their business here in South Dakota.

If a grain farmer wants to invest in his/her operation to expand, become more efficient or maybe make way to bring in a son or daughter, they are only limited by the availability of capital. If a livestock producer has the same goals of expanding, investing in technology or facilities to become more efficient, the biggest hurdle they face is not the money to do the project, but the various levels of local and state government they must get the approval from.



Yet another hurdle is local approval is not just a simple majority vote. A super majority is required by state law which again holds the livestock producer to a much higher standard.

I truly believe we are witnessing a much more sustainable and viable long term realization to the value of and commitment to livestock development. This can be attributed to not only the vision and efforts brought forth by the Governor's direct actions and involvement, but also the combined efforts of the Department of Agriculture, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Transportation, Department of Revenue, Governor's Office of

Economic Development, proactive county and township governments, the state's swine and dairy producers, the state's dairy processors and a number of very proactive livestock businesses that see and want to act on the vision of “The Next Generation of Livestock Production” here in South Dakota.

Walt Bone

Office of Ag Policy



Courtney De La Rosa,
General Counsel &
Ag Policy Director

Office of Ag Policy Director Spotlight

1. Where are you originally from? I am a native of Webster, SD. I graduated college at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, NM and law school at USD in Vermillion.

2. What are some of your hobbies? I am an avid sports fan- following the Minnesota Twins and Vikings, Boston Celtics, USD Coyotes and Pierre Governors. I also enjoy fishing, boating, golfing, and spending time in the Black Hills.

3. Why did you decide to work for SDDA? It was a great opportunity to combine my interests in law and policy in an area that I am passionate about. I may have outgrown my FFA jacket, but I remain heavily involved in promoting and supporting South Dakota's #1 industry.

4. What about your job do you love most? Traveling all across the state meeting with producers and others involved in agriculture.

5. What has been the highlight of your career so far? I joined the Department in 2012. Working with the Governor's Ag Advisory Council, Drought Task Force, and facilitating the Key Leader Roundtable committee for Water, Natural Resources, & Energy have all been rewarding experiences thus far.

The Office of Agricultural Policy assists with the development and promotion of agricultural policy in the state of South Dakota.

Office responsibilities include:

- research and develop factual information on issues affecting the State of South Dakota and its agricultural industry.
- develop briefing documents, policy statements, and other informational documents for the secretary of agriculture and the Governor on a variety of subjects.

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Brunson Ranch Benefits From SD Farm Service Agency & SD Dept. of Ag CRP Hay Donation Program

Cindy Brunson considers herself a lifetime rancher. “I grew up south of Belvidere, South Dakota and so did my husband,” said Brunson.

“My grandparents homesteaded in Tripp Co. Then we moved to Mellette Co. and started a Trading Post that was closed during WWII due to rationing. The family continued to ranch in Mellette and Todd County. In 1987, we moved to the Edgemont area.”

The Brunson’s run mostly Angus cattle and breed them to Charolais Bulls. “It was a lot of tension this year because of rains that never came,” said Brunson. “We had to make early decisions about marketing the calves first week of August instead of the usual fall time.”



Hay this year was scarce for many producers across South Dakota because of the drought. “We had absolutely no hay,” said Brunson. “We hay when there is hay even if its marginal and there was none. On a good year, we can put up over 1,500 bales on that hayground.”

Cindy and her husband were hit hard by the 1,000 acre Plains Valley fire burning all their hay ground. “My husband got the disc out and put a fire barrier around it and it did save 1000s of more acres that could have been burned,” said Brunson. “The blessing was that this program came about.”

The South Dakota Department of Agriculture (SDDA) partnered with the South Dakota Farm Service Agency and made Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) hay available to donate this September. Normally, under the program, this hay would be destroyed because the producer is already monetarily compensated for managing the area.

Applications were taken for the hay and Cindy Brunson was one recipient. “We received 65 bales from Yankton County,” said Brunson. “It’s not going to save the whole ranch but it was a chance of some hope.”

Brunson said the program provided them a chance to look ahead. “It’s a beneficial deal. This little bit of hay makes you look forward to next year.”

SDDA distributed around 650 bales to 12 producers in need throughout South Dakota.



Kopriva Carries on the Family Tradition in Agriculture

Lee Kopriva of rural Raymond broke into the cattle business at the age of 4, when his parents started him off with a heifer calf. Since then Lee has had a passion for agriculture and the animals he has raised and worked with. Lee's great-great grandfather homesteaded just one mile from his current residence and he is carrying on a deep-rooted family tradition in agriculture.

Together with his parents, he raises Angus cattle and hay. While he and his parents operate separately, they work together to operate more efficiently. The Kopriva family markets a set of yearling and 2 year-old bulls in their annual bull sale in May. They have a rigorous culling strategy, normally keeping a large end of heifer calves as replacements and selling cows that have production issues. Kopriva uses artificial insemination and embryo transfer to gain access to the genetics he wants to use and replicate. These technologies have allowed him to grow and expand in gradual increments.

Lee's hay enterprise works complimentary with his family's cattle. In an adequate moisture year, they can produce enough feed for the cattle enterprise, in addition to having some really high quality alfalfa and alfalfa/grass mix that can be sold as dairy and horse hay.

Lee admits there are difficulties that come along with being a young farmer/rancher in South Dakota. He says, "Competition with more established farmers and ranchers can be challenging" and "getting a land base and having access to capital."

However Lee says, "I'll be competitive but what I would rather do is work cooperatively. Young cattle ranchers need to build a connection with farmers who strictly want to farm. With more pasture land being tilled, grazing crop residues are becoming an important part of managing feed cost. Trading the agronomic benefits of cover crops to the farmer for the grazing benefits to the rancher can be really good for both."

Lee spent four years at South Dakota State University, earning a degree in Animal Science and Ag Business. Lee believes that getting a college or technical school education can really help the young farmer/rancher because meeting other people and networking can provide advantages later on. He has also found camaraderie through farm organizations like South Dakota Farm Bureau and Cattlemen's Association, which have groups for young farmers/ranchers to belong to. Despite some challenges, Lee has found many rewards in being a young farmer/rancher in South Dakota and he will continue to carry on a family tradition in agriculture.



Always New Challenges On The Bennett Ranch

For Jackson County rancher Brigham Bennett, each day presents a different opportunity to do something he loves. Raised on his family ranch near Philip, Bennett found an interest in agriculture at an early age. He has been farming and ranching for about 15 years, ever since he was involved in FFA in high school and purchased his first livestock.

Bennett continues to raise cattle with a cow/calf operation and also looks forward to haying and harvest each year. He chose to stay involved in agriculture due to a respect for the lifestyle. He appreciates that each day on his ranch is different than the last and that things are ever-changing in his line of work. The fact that his days are never the same is something Bennett enjoys and looks forward to. He also takes pride in his role in taking care of the land, livestock, and machinery.

Bennett's main challenge in being a young farmer/rancher in South Dakota is access to land. He would like to get his own land to work, but has settled on renting hay ground and pasture for the time-being. Rising agriculture land prices and competition for available acres is a challenge many young farmers and ranchers across the state battle. However, Bennett still encourages other young people to get involved in agriculture and take advantage of new technology that makes farming and ranching more efficient.

Bennett displays a passion for the land and working with his cattle. Despite some of the challenges he has faced, he continues to enjoy everyday life on his ranch. For Bennett, each day presents new opportunities and challenges, but it is the ever-changing nature of his trade that he thrives on.



SDDA is Tweeting!

Over the past few months, SDDA has ramped up their social media standings. We now have a blog, we're tweeting, we post pictures to flickr, and we post to facebook almost everyday! Follow us!



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[@SDAgriculture](https://twitter.com/SDAgriculture)



<http://sddepartmentofag.blogspot.com/>

SDDA Weekly Ag News

If you're looking for statewide and national agricultural news, sign up for our weekly newsletter at sdda.sd.gov

Ag Development

The Division of Agricultural Development assists with the development and promotion of agriculture and agricultural products in the state of South Dakota.

Division responsibilities include:

- Finance
- Grant Coordination
- Ag Finance Counseling
- Ag Loan Mediation
- Crop and Livestock Marketing
- Business Development Programs



Paul Kostboth,
Division Director

Ag Development Director Spotlight

- 1. Where are you originally from?** Canistota, SD
- 2. What are some of your hobbies?** I enjoy going back home to help work on the family farm, camping, golfing, hunting, fishing, and just about any other outdoor activity. I also like to cook and am always looking to create new dishes. In addition, I have a '66 Mustang that I'm currently rebuilding as time permits.
- 3. Why did you decide to work for SDDA?** The exciting initiatives currently underway, enthusiasm of SDDA's executive leadership, and obviously high quality SDDA staff made this a clear opportunity to join a great team.
- 4. What about your job do you love most?** In both previous jobs and private business ventures, I have always loved being challenged and continuously working to find new ways to make improvements. I look forward to those same types of opportunities as part of the SDDA team.
- 5. What has been the highlight of your career so far?** The highlight of my career with SDHDA came this year when we were able to work with private industry builders to take what had historically tended to be a bit of a contentious relationship at times and turn it in to an exciting new partnership.

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Show Me The Moooooney!

By Terri LaBrie, SDDA Loan Administrator

Low-interest loan programs are available to South Dakota farmers and ranchers from the South Dakota Department of Agriculture. Whether you're a beginning farmer, a livestock feeder, cow-calf operator, or dairyman, we have a loan program for you.

When Gary and Amy Blasé were deciding if they were going to quit dairying all together or expand their operation, they contacted their local bank; who in turn contacted the department of agriculture for financing.

"The partnership we can offer bankers is a win-win for them as well as their customers," says David Skaggs, dairy development specialist for the South Dakota Department of Agriculture. The department works with local banks in providing the financing so it benefits the producers with a lower interest rate and benefits the

local bank by spreading some of the risk. The department was able to assist the bank with a remodel of the existing facility for the retrofit of the robotic milking machines.



The Blasés now have four robotic machines milking their 270 head herd about 15 miles south of Mitchell. These milkers allowed the Blasés to cut about half of their labor costs.



Along with dairy facility loans available for our South Dakota dairymen as well as dairymen wanting to relocate to South Dakota, the department also provides financing for beginning farmers.

"The beginning farmer bond program is a great way for beginning farmers to access capital at lower interest rates," says Terri LaBrie, Loan Administrator. This program provides a tax-exempt bond as a means for lower interest rate financing. This is also a great way for retiring farmers to sell their agricultural land on a contract sale to a qualifying beginning farmer with all of the interest income tax-exempt.

The Beginning Farmer Bond program began in 1996 and since inception the department, through the South Dakota Value Added Finance Authority, has issued 319 beginning farmer bonds for almost \$39 million. The new beginning farmer bond limit for 2013 is \$501,100 – indexed annually and can be used for agricultural land, depreciable property, or breeding livestock.

Beginning farmer down payment guarantees are also available for qualifying beginning farmers when utilizing the bond program.

Other financial programs are available for livestock purchases, livestock guarantees, manure management facilities, value added production such as grain storage, feedlots, dairies, and facilities and equipment for agricultural processing ventures.

Russian Trade Mission

By Ty Eschenbaum, SDDA Value-Added Marketing Specialist

In October 2012, three individuals from South Dakota traveled to Russia for a trade mission on beef genetics. The purpose of the trade mission was to learn more about that specific market and the opportunity in Russia for cattle exports from South Dakota.

The delegation consisted of Ty Eschenbaum from the South Dakota Department of Agriculture; Troy Thomas, a seed-stock beef producer from Harrold, SD; and Dr. Kelly Bruns, Animal Science Professor from South Dakota State University. They joined a group of other delegates representing Montana and Kansas on the trip.



The mission focused on two objectives: promote the US, more specifically the northern plains as a source for high quality beef genetics; and gather knowledge, contacts, and information regarding the Russian market. The group toured numerous agricultural sites that were extremely interesting, everything from a 60,000 cow/calf operation that utilizes US and Australian genetics to a very small operation that ran 100 Hereford cows, harvesting 1-2 head per week to sell at a local market.

Russian agriculture varies vastly from agriculture in South Dakota. Although the land, soils, and climate are similar, there seems to be an accumulation of small things that inhibit their agricultural industries from growing and becoming more efficient. Infrastructure, land ownership rights, educational systems, anti-corruption laws and regulations, all things Americans take for granted, are not present in Russia, so the agricultural community has several hurdles it must overcome in order to be successful.



The perseverance of the Russian farmers that were visited was inspirational. One gentleman built his calving barn, working corrals, and slaughter facility by himself with resources he currently had on hand. While not as efficient as pre-made or purchased products, the hard-work and persistence building those structures using repurposed materials was amazing to see.

Agriculture needs to remember its roots and that not every other nation is at the level of technology we enjoy.

Russian Trade Mission



According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, from May of 2011 to May of 2012, over 61,000 head of live cattle left US borders for the Russian Federation. At least a few hundred, if not more, of those cattle came from South Dakota ranching operations.

By promoting SD genetics and building relationships in this market, the demand for high quality South Dakota cattle will build. If a South Dakota producer is interested in learning more about this market, contact the Division of Agricultural Development. The

South Dakota Department of Agriculture is planning a follow-up trip to Russia in 2013 and will use contacts made from the previous mission in order to be aware of any future shipments that are looking for cattle.



Angus cattle at Angus Genetics of Russia south of Moscow.



Members of SDDA's trade delegation: Michael McFaul, U.S. Ambassador to Russia (center), Troy Thomas, beef producer from Harrold, SD (left)



Display bull at the Golden Autumn Agricultural Exhibition in Moscow. Vertical horns are a characteristic of some of the native breeds that have survived in Russia.



Livestock Pavilion building at Golden Autumn. This houses beef, sheep, dairy cattle, goats, poultry and fur-bearing animals.



Kevin Fridley,
Division Director

Ag Services Director Spotlight

1. Where are you originally from?

I grew up on my family's farm in Beadle County, SD. I was a graduate of SDSU with degrees in Ag Business and Commercial Economics.

2. What are some of your hobbies?

I enjoy the outdoors; hunting, fishing and scuba diving.

3. What about your job do you love most?

I think South Dakota is a great place to be involved in agriculture. South Dakota is a great place to live, work, and raise a family. I enjoy working with the dedicated staff at SDDA and meeting with South Dakota producers.

4. What have been some accomplishments in your career?

I was Past President of the SD Ag in the Classroom Board, SD Seed Certification Board, Central Plant Board and National Grasshopper Board. I was past co-chair on the South Dakota Governor's Drought Task Force. I am currently a member on the South Dakota Homeland Security Advisory Committee.

The Division of Agricultural Services develops policy and legislation to ensure agricultural commodities will be eligible for export from South Dakota — protects the environmental and public health by effective enforcement of statutes and rules — and protects South Dakota producers and consumers of agricultural products from unsafe actions, product misrepresentation and unfair trade practices.

Two program offices comprise this Division: The Office of Agronomy Services and the Office of Plant Protection, Dairy, and Egg.

To provide effective enforcement of statutes and rules, Agricultural Services ensures coordination and communication with producers, land owners/managers and agricultural business.

Division responsibilities include:

- Animal Remedy
- Apiary
- Dairy
- Egg
- Feed
- Fertilizer
- Nursery
- Pesticide
- Plant Protection
- Rodent Bait Manufacture
- Seed
- Soil Amendments
- Weed & Pest Commission Programs



SDDA Container Recycling & Waste Pesticide Collection

The South Dakota Department of Agriculture (SDDA) collected 8,926 used, nonreturnable pesticide containers in 1993 as part of a pilot program entitled Container Recycling & Waste Pesticide Collection Program. The program, enacted by the 1992 South Dakota Legislature, fulfills the need for a recycling program to dispose of unusable pesticide containers properly. The pilot program was successful and expanded to a fully implemented program in 1994.

Goals of the programs are to reduce the risks to the environment and human health from the storage of unusable pesticides and to provide an opportunity for pesticide applicators to dispose of containers properly. This will also reduce the amount of plastics in South Dakota landfills and the environment. These goals are of great benefit to everyone in the state, while they cost the applicator nothing.



To date, over 1.5 million containers have been recycled. If not for the Container Recycling Program, the containers would be burnt or end up in landfills. The environmental impact of this program has kept over 210,000 containers out of landfills in 2012.

The containers are ground and sold to Container Services Network, a contractor/cooperator for ACRC/Crop Life America in New Jersey. Tri-Rinse, out of Missouri, processes the mini-bulk containers. The recycled plastic have been turned into curb stops, pallets, and more recently drainage tile. Another use for the recycled material is fuel.

The program collects containers periodically throughout the year at drop-off locations in Pierre and Vermillion, at collection sites across the state or picked up from the producer if they make arrangements with SDDA.

Participation in the waste pesticide program includes pre-registration, prioritization, notification, and collection. SDDA requests producers to pre-register for the program in order to determine which type and number of pesticide can be collected. Certain chemicals may not be collected. Out of the registered chemicals, SDDA ranks the priority of which products will be collected. Producers will be notified if their pesticides will be collected.

If anyone is interested in being a part of this program, they can contact the SDDA Division of Agricultural Services for further information.

South Dakota's Bee Industry

The apiary business in South Dakota is buzzing. That is because apiary is the term for a place where honeybee colonies are kept.

There are 185 South Dakotans keeping bees in the state on approximately 6,700 apiaries. This number has been steady over the past couple of years with an increase from 15.6 million pounds of honey in 2010 to 16.5 million pounds in 2011. South Dakota ranks **third** nationally behind North Dakota and California.



Each beehive contains about 60,000 bees with 48 to 60 hives maintained in an apiary. That equals almost 3 million bees collecting pollen and nectar along with pollinating nearby crops. Worker bees gather nectar and pollen from the local area before returning to the hive. Back at the hive, the bees de-hydrate the nectar by fanning their wings while also adding an enzyme, which makes honey.

An average worker bee will produce up to one teaspoon of honey in her lifetime, which lasts about 45 days. With the average hive making about two pounds of honey a day.

Honey dates back over 150 million years to Ancient Egypt. It can be used as a sweetener, substitute for sugar in some recipes, and can be used on minor cuts, scrapes and burns in the healing process. As a bonus, honey never spoils. Honey contains naturally occurring elements, which prohibit bacteria growth.

The honeybee is facing several concerns today. The biggest issue is bee health. Loss of habitat, pesticides, parasites, mites and diseases contribute to the decline in bee health and honey production. Bees are important to agriculture because they pollinate dozens of plants that produce what we eat. Bees pollinate your vegetable gardens, some row crops and forbs which are fed to livestock. Bees are an important cog in the agricultural wheel. The production of honey is a crop worth about \$13 million in South Dakota.

The South Dakota Department of Agriculture Apiary Program helps beekeepers keep informed of the latest health concerns and remedies along with educational tools to assist them in sustaining or expanding their apiary.

The next time you see a honey bee industriously working on blooming plants in your area, smile, relax and remember that she is one of the many hard working and helpful neighbors with which you are blessed in this wonderful state of South Dakota!

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Weed & Pest Year in Review

South Dakota's biological control program continues to thrive. We collected and released bio-control agents for Toadflax, Knapweed, Leafy Spurge, Common mullein, and Purple loosestrife. We cooperated with USDA/APHIS to bring in and do three caged and three open field releases using *Oberea erythrocephala*. *Oberea* has a different reproductive and feeding behavior and therefore, may be better suited for successful establishment in the habitats where the flea beetles are less effective.



The Purple loosestrife and knapweed insectary continues to produce bio-control agents for release in both Nebraska and South Dakota. This is a unique project that utilizes cooperation between the counties and the departments of agriculture in Nebraska, South Dakota and the Yankton Trusty unit of the Mike Durfee State Prison. The counties and states gather the root stock for the insectary and the inmates provide the labor to rear the bio-control agents.

Marshall Co. Bio-Collection

Pat Keatts-BIA
Ron Thyen-SD Weed & Pest Commissioner
Connie Muller-USFWS
Carrie Tucek-USDA/APHIS

South Dakota counties reported over a five percent reduction in state listed noxious weeds. They also reported a two and a half percent reduction in locally listed noxious weeds, despite adding Oxeye daisy and White horehound to the locally noxious list.

Currently, South Dakota list seven state noxious weeds and twenty-three locally noxious weeds. The state listed weeds are Canada thistle; Hoary cress; Leafy spurge; Perennial sow thistle; Purple loosestrife; Russian knapweed; and Salt Cedar. To be listed as a state noxious weed the weed must be a non-native perennial capable of unique and rapid spread, decreases land values, and requires special control methods. For more information, contact SDDA Ag Services Division or your local county Weed & Pest Supervisor.



Ray Sowers,
State Forester & Division Director

The mission of the Division of Resource Conservation and Forestry is to conserve, protect, improve and develop the natural resources of South Dakota for its citizens.

Division responsibilities include:

- Resource Conservation
- Community Forestry
 - Forest Health
- Service Forestry Programs



Resource Conservation & Forestry Director Spotlight

- 1. Where are you originally from?** I was born in Flagstaff, Arizona. Attended college at Northern Arizona University and received my BS in Forest Land Management in 1974.
- 2. What are some of your hobbies?** I am an avid science fiction reader since Jr. High. I like to fish and camp and do both whenever I can. I delve in genealogy and have both sides of my family traced back to pre-European settlement.
- 3. Why did you decide to work for SDDA?** You go where the work is. I was hired as Ponderosa pine specialist to serve as the timber staff specialist and forest products utilization specialist in the Black Hills. I was moved to Pierre after three years to serve as the Division Forest Management Specialist.
- 4. What about your job do you love most?** What I have always liked about working with state forestry agencies is the contact and assistance we provide to private forest landowners. I thoroughly enjoy working with private landowners.
- 5. What has been the highlight of your career so far?** There have been many highlights during my career of 40+ years in forestry. I would have to say that one of my most memorable experiences was setting up a new district office in Prescott, Arizona. I had responsibility for almost one-quarter of the entire state – an area probably as large as South Dakota. My second highlight has been working on the current mountain pine beetle epidemic in the Black Hills. It has been a great learning experience.

Beating the Beetles

How many mountain pine beetles (MPB) are in South Dakota?

Estimating the number of mountain pine beetles (MPB) in South Dakota is kind of like estimating the number of grains of sand on a beach during high tide. The number seems limitless, and you can't see them. But, nevertheless, we aim to please. A tree about 12 inches in diameter will hold about 1,500 mountain pine beetles before it hangs out the "No Vacancy" sign; that is, it releases an anti-aggregation pheromone that tells other mountain pine beetles to find a different tree because this one is full. Some estimates suggest there are about 8 million infested trees in the Black Hills, and most are in South Dakota. If we assume 4 million infested trees are in SD, times 1,500 beetles per tree we come up with about 6 billion beetles.

What efforts has the state done to mitigate MPB?

The SDDA, through its Resource Conservation & Forestry Division, has been combating the MPB epidemic since 2004 when populations first started building in the Black Elk Wilderness of the Black Hills National Forest, and the Sylvan Lake area of Custer State Park. While thinning and removal of infested trees has been ongoing in CSP, no management activities could take place in the Black Elk due to its wilderness status. In-flights from federal lands have continued to cause mortality in the Sylvan area every year, and every year RC&F works cooperatively with CSP to combat the problem. In 2011, a blow up of MPB was identified in the main body of CSP, and almost 100,000 trees were either cut down and treated on site, or removed for processing at area sawmills.

In 2011, Governor Dugaard introduced the Black Hills Mountain Pine Beetle initiative which dedicated \$4 million to help private forest landowners treat the growing MPB problem on private lands. In the first year of the initiative, the state teamed up with South Dakota counties to survey almost 112,000 acres on 1,665 private parcels and identified over 185,000 infested trees. There was no cost to landowners for the survey and marking of infested trees. The state also provided up to 50 percent cost share to landowners for treating their infested trees.

Landowners took advantage of state and county cost share programs to treat almost 76,000 infested trees, and almost 42,000 infested trees were treated with no cost share.



Winner of 2012 Council of State Governments Innovations Award

What resources are available to private landowners wanting to help mitigate MPB on their land?

The state is continuing the Black Hills Mountain Pine Beetle initiative by offering a free service of surveying and identifying MPB infested trees within state defined priority areas. Also, trees that are marked by the state marking crew are eligible for up to 75 percent cost share for treatment and removal of infested trees. The state maintains a list of contractors ready and willing to cut and remove or treat infested trees. The list is provided to all landowners that participate in the survey and marking program, or any landowner that requests it.

Finally, spraying trees in the spring before they become infested is another option. Spraying should be completed in May, or at the latest by July 1st. Spraying trees, if done properly, can be very effective at preventing an MPB infestation. However, it can be expensive and only protects the trees that are sprayed. Generally, it is only recommended for individual high value trees. Spraying is ineffective once a tree becomes infested with MPB.

The state also maintains the BeatttheBeetle.com website. This website contains the latest information about mountain pine beetle biology, treatment options, timing of treatment, preventive spraying, and the state assistance programs.

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Urban Forestry: Choosing A Tree

By: Tiffany Arp, SDDA Urban Forestry Specialist

The term 'urban forest' refers to the collection of trees, shrubs, and related vegetation growing in cities and towns. These areas include city parks, streetscapes, and trees on public, private, and commercial lands. Approximately 71% of South Dakotans live in urban, suburban, or community areas and benefit from our state's urban forests.

South Dakota's urban forests improve quality of life, raise property values, save energy, clean the air, reduce noise pollution, improve water quality, reduce erosion, improve business foot traffic, and improve a community's "sense of place." Each year

the 5.414 million trees that compose South Dakota's urban forests remove 1,350 tons of pollutants at a value of \$10 million; sequester (removes) 27,200 tons of carbon at a value of \$588,000; and store (long-term) 697,000 tons of carbon at a value of \$14.4 million. Pollutants include ozone, nitrogen dioxide, carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and particulate matter.



There are many different types of trees that will grow in South Dakota. We have over 80 different tree species and cultivars on the division's website:

<http://sdda.sd.gov/conservation-forestry/south-dakota-tree-listdefault.aspx>.

When selecting a species, you should check the list to see if it grows in your region of the state. Regions are listed for each species on the list. You can also call your local city forester or state forestry representative for species recommendations

(<http://sdda.sd.gov/conservation-forestry/forest-stewardship-program/office-locations/default.aspx>).

There are many places you can go to buy trees. Local licensed nurseries often offer stock that will grow well in your area, and are usually knowledgeable about tree planting and care. When deciding which tree to purchase at the nursery, look for trees that are at least an inch and a quarter caliper and that have self-supporting, straight trunks and strong central leaders. They should be free from injury including: scrapes, wounds, and improper pruning cuts. They should also be free from disease, insect, or other infestations. Containerized trees should show no signs of girdling. When in leaf, foliage should be full and vigorous.

One of the most important things to remember is not every vacant spot needs a tree or can grow a tree successfully. Narrow boulevards, areas with overhead utility lines, a site with poor soils, or a spot where water stands for part of the year are just a few areas where trees should not be planted. We need to choose our planting sites carefully. It is the first, and often one of the most important, steps in successfully planting a tree.

When digging the planting hole, remember a shallow wide hole is better than a deep narrow one. Trees planted too deep become structurally weaker as they mature, making them susceptible to failure in strong weather.



Containerized trees from nurseries are often times planted in those containers as much as six inches too deep (see arrow). You must take off the soil from the top of the containers until you find the swelling of the root collar. Once you do this, plant the tree with the collar slightly above the ground level. Many of these containerized trees also have circling roots. Prevent root girdling by vertically cutting any roots that show tendencies to circle the root ball. Circling roots can eventually strangle your tree as it grows bigger.

Post planting tree care is the most often overlooked step in planting a tree. Mulching, watering, and staking a newly planted tree can make the difference between survival and death. Mulch should be spread in a three foot ring around the tree two to four inches deep. Be sure to leave a five to six inch gap around the trunk to avoid molding. The rule of thumb

for watering your tree is two to four gallons every three to five days for the first growing season. You do not need to water if it rains. Staking provides a young tree with support it needs until the trunk is strong enough to hold its canopy upright. Most trees will not need to be staked longer than a year, but should be left for at least one growing season. As soon as the tree can stand on its own, remove the stakes. Remember to remove all tags, ties, and container materials when planting.

If your tree, young or old, is showing signs of declining health, there are options available to you and your tree. There are a number of insects and diseases that can attack our trees. It can be overwhelming trying to decide what to do. To help make this easier, the division has gathered a number of resources and technical assistance for your tree healthcare needs (<http://sdda.sd.gov/conservation-forestry/pests-insects-diseases/>).



Each of our foresters are experienced with diagnosing various insect and disease problems. We can diagnose and give treatment recommendations after seeing a photograph and asking a few questions or taking a look at the tree in person. This is a free service provided by our division. Dr. John Ball sends out a weekly Pest Update. The Pest Update features insect and disease pest threats showing up across South Dakota as well as current concerns we have been asked about. His Pest Alerts are archived on the division's website here: <http://sdda.sd.gov/conservation-forestry/tree-pest-alerts/>.

Unlike traditional infrastructure such as pipelines, buildings, and roadways, urban forests appreciate in value over time, meaning a low-cost solution now in the form of urban forest investments becomes a long-term benefit. Taking care of South Dakota's green infrastructure will lead to many benefits for years to come.

State Fair Manager Spotlight

- 1. Where are you originally from?** I grew up in Parker, SD, attended college at USD, lived in Richmond, Texas for 2 ½ years, then Sioux Falls for 17 years, and now Huron for 4 ½ years.
- 2. What are some of your hobbies?** Hobbies are bow hunting, kayaking, camping, and hiking.
- 3. Why did you decide to work for SDDA?** I decided to work for SDDA because I enjoy the challenge of making the State Fair a successful year-round, family-friendly venue that showcases youth, achievement, agriculture, and community.
- 4. What about your job do you love most?** Bringing new events to the fairgrounds and watching people have a good time.
- 5. What has been the highlight of your career so far?** Increasing the attendance of the State Fair by over 28% since 2007.



Jerome Hertel,
State Fair Manager

The first South Dakota State Fair was held Sept. 29 through Oct. 2, 1885. It moved around to various cities throughout South Dakota until making Huron a permanent home in 1905.

The State Fair Park Division works with the State Fair Advisory Commission, whose 13 members are appointed by the Governor, to plan and manage one of the biggest annual events in our state every year.

Division responsibilities include:

- State Fair Planning & Management
 - Building Maintenance
 - Marketing & Events Coordination
- Camping & Competitive Exhibits Coordination
- State Fair Foundation Coordination
- State Fair Advisory Commission Coordination



www.sdstatefair.com

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Nothing Quite Like The South Dakota State Fair

As Governor Dugaard stated in his column this summer, “There’s nothing quite like the State Fair.” With many attractions and events, the South Dakota State Fair in Huron is truly a family tradition in our state.

“The attendance at this year’s fair was 192,790, up 1% over 2011,” said Jerome Hertel, State Fair Director. The fair boasts an attendance increase of 44% since 2006.

Many attractions and events have been added over the last few years contributing to the increase in attendance. “Our fair-goers really look forward to the concerts,” said Candi Hettinger, Marketing Director for the State Fair. “They are always a hot topic and people look forward to our announcement of them in the spring.”

In addition to the grandstand concerts, the fair offers free entertainment on their six stages throughout the park. “People have a lot to choose from!” said Hettinger.

“The Championship Bull Riding has also been part of the line-up since 2005,” said Hettinger. “Championship Bull Riding is quickly becoming one of the premier bull riding organizations as it now hosts its finals at Cheyenne Frontier Days.”



Outside of the grandstand events, the fair is an exciting summer event for kids, especially the carnival. “I learned on a visit to a 4th grade classroom in Wessington Springs just how important the carnival is to the fair. Every kid in that room made mention of it and how awesome it was,” said Hettinger. “At that moment, the fact that the carnival was a major attraction really sank in.”

The fair also hosts the State 4-H Championships which bring in many young agriculture enthusiasts and their families. Here, all ages compete in livestock showmanship, cooking, baking and craft competitions.

With all these people in need of a place to stay, camping has been a custom for the State Fair since its beginning. “We have 1,250 campsites on the main fairgrounds that have electricity,” said Hertel. “It’s safe to say, we can accommodate 2,000 campers or more between our off and on grounds sites.”

You may be wondering, with so much to organize, how much time goes into planning the State Fair? “Sometimes we haven’t even gotten through the fair and plans are being made for the following year,” said Hettinger. “The two big pieces of work that start earlier than anything are the entertainer search and sponsorship acquisitions.”

“The big wave of employees comes a few days before the fair when security, restroom crews, gate attendants, shuttle bus drivers, and beer garden attendants all arrive,” said Hertel. “The total number of employees yearly is near 400.”

The State Fair has offered South Dakota a summer tradition for years and with the success seen in the last few years, this tradition is here to stay. For more information on the 2013 State Fair events, visit <http://www.sdstatefair.com/>



The South Dakota Division of Wildland Fire was created within the Department of Agriculture at the request of the Governor and with the approval of the State Legislature on July 1, 2001. The Division is responsible for protecting state and private lands within the Black Hills Forest Fire Protection District and other forested areas throughout the State.

The Division has nine separate but interdependent program functions that address fire management and suppression. Each program function represents a specific management need but is dependent and impacted by the other nine program functions. None of the program functions can stand alone and still meet the responsibilities of the division as defined by State Law.

The nine functional program areas are:

- Fire Management and Prescribed Fire
- Fire Prevention and Public Education
 - Fire Training
 - Fire Coordination
- Volunteer Fire Assistance
 - Dispatch
- Hazardous Fuels Mitigation
 - Aviation Support
 - Fire Suppression



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Jay Esperance,
Wildland Fire Coordinator

Wildland Fire Coordinator Spotlight

1. Where are you originally from?

I was raised in Folsom, California.

2. What are some of your hobbies? Sports as an athlete and a fan. And anything outdoors: hunting, camping, fishing. I'm an avid fly fisherman.

3. Why did you decide to work for SDDA? I believe in the program and people I joined. I want to provide the best service to the tax payers that entrust me as a public servant.

4. What about your job do you love most? It is my program to move forward with. I have excellent support from Secretary Bones. Also, I share a vision with the Wildland Fire Staff and the folks who are out there getting the work done.

5. What has been the highlight of your career so far? Being on the Incident Management Team which arrived September 12, 2001, providing oversight to the rescue/recovery efforts of the twin towers disaster.

The Heat Is On

“Within the last year and a half, I have come to really appreciate the tireless dedication of the men and women that make up our Wildland Fire Division based in the Black Hills,” said S.D. Secretary of Agriculture Walt Bones. “As one of the seven divisions of the South Dakota Department of Agriculture, they cooperate with local volunteer fire departments, independent contractors, and federal fire crews to protect the lives and property of our state’s citizens.”

South Dakota Wildland Fire has 30 full time employees. During the summer months, the Division increases to 120 with the hiring of seasonal firefighters.

The Division also has two handcrews that are staffed for 11 months out of the year. When not fighting Wildland fires, these crews work in the hazardous fuels mitigation program.

“This last year on federal and state agency lands, over 2,563 fires burned 220,840+ acres in South Dakota,” said Jay Esperance, Wildland Fire Division Director. “138,951 acres were burned on federal land and 81,819 acres on state and private lands.”

Wildland Fire Training Programs

“To keep firefighters trained and prepared for any situation, Wildland Fire offers an Engine Academy which is a 40 hour course with hands on exercises in the operation and maintenance of a Wildland fire engine,” said Esperance. The primary focus of this weeklong training is firefighter safety, refreshing skills and knowledge of the equipment that is used while fighting wildland fires.

In 2012, approximately 966 firefighters in 54 different classes were trained throughout South Dakota. This training enabled firefighters to keep current with the required qualifications and provided training for new firefighters.

Hazardous Fuels Reduction Program

One program that Wildland Fire administers is the hazardous fuels reduction program. “This is a cost-share program with the objective of reducing the loss of lives and property due to wildfire, through thinning and education,” said Esperance. “The primary target audience of our program is homeowners within the Wildland/Urban Interface (WUI).”

WUI is a set of conditions found throughout the country, including South Dakota and especially the Black Hills, consisting of homes intermixed with Wildland fuels such as trees, bushes, and shrubs. The prairie and even some cities and towns have areas meeting the WUI definition.

There are two sub-programs under the hazardous fuels reduction program. One is a 50% cost-share program. This is available in all areas meeting the program criteria and the homeowner works directly with the contractor. The other is a 100% paid for program but is only available in a few specific locations. The treatment is conducted by a state handcrew or a state selected contractor.

Treatments of WUI areas include thinning of trees in specific areas and making sure vegetation near the house is well watered.

In 2012, over 500 acres and about 125 project sites were treated with this program. If you would like more information on the hazardous fuels reduction program, please contact the South Dakota Wildland Fire Division at 605-394-5203 or 605-394-2584.

We have a lot to be thankful for with our Wildland Fire Units. “The next time you see your local public safety officials, thank them for putting their lives on the line for you, your family, and your property,” said Secretary Bones.





Rural Reflections

2012

2013 Dates to Remember

SD State Fairgrounds Events

The Original SD BBQ Championships
May 31-June 1

Wheel Jam
May 31-June 2

South Dakota Outdoor Expo
June 8-9

State 4-H Horse Show
July 23-25

State 4-H Dog Show
August 17

South Dakota State Fair
August 29-September 2

Wissota 100
September 11-14



SD Agriculture Events

“The Next Generation of
Livestock Production” Forums
January-March

Check sdda.sd.gov for locations and times.

Spraying for Mountain Pine Beetle
Preventions Workshops
February-March

2013 Wildfire Academy, Ft. Pierre
March 21-24

S.D. Governor’s
Ag Development Summit, Pierre
June 25-26

Managing for Mountain Pine Beetle
Early September

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